claim 9 was acted on for the first time on December 31, 2002. Applicant requests that the Finality of the Office Action of December 31, 2002 be withdrawn.

The Applicant herewith petitions the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks to extend the time for response to the Office Action dated December 31, 2002 as necessary.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required to Acct. No. 11-0224. Applicant further respectfully requests that this response be accepted as a bona fide effort to meet any potential response requirements outstanding and due in the above captioned matter.

Please amend the application as follows:

MARKED-UP VERSION OF THE AMENDED CLAIMS

(Version with markings to show changes made)

1.   (previously presented)   A method for operating a coin actuated entertainment automat comprising

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placing a coin into a coin acceptance device of an entertainment automat;

testing the coin in a coin testing device;

displaying symbols on a symbol display device, wherein a displayed symbol combination comprises several symbols and wherein upon reaching of a predetermined symbol combination or upon reaching of a predetermined credit balance in a credit balance counter disposed on the side of the control unit in the following a symbol combination is displayed with the symbol display device;

controlling the course of the game with a control unit including a microcomputer and a pseudorandom number generator;

influencing the course of the game by an operational element disposed on the front side of the entertainment automat;

substituting a symbol by another randomly determined symbol;

renewing the symbols within a predetermined time window until a winning carrying symbol combination is reached; and

accumulating the obtained winning in a credit balance counter.

2.   (original)   The method according to claim 1, further comprising

networking a second entertainment automat to the first entertainment automat;

simultaneously switching the played entertainment automats (1) into a uniform game mode upon reaching of a predetermined symbol combination or upon reaching of a predetermined credit balance state of a common credit balance counter;

determining in a game mode the entertainment automat, which has reached the highest winning value within a time window predetermined by the control unit;

coordinating the winning value to that entertainment automat, which entertainment automat has reached the highest winning within the time limited game mode.

3.   (previously presented) A method for operating a coin

actuated entertainment automat comprising

inserting payment into an automatic entertainment automat;

activating a game time after receiving the payment by the automatic

entertainment machine;

randomly drawing all cards;

determining if a game time has ended;

displaying the winning values in case the game time has ended;

determining if a key has been depressed in case the game time has

not yet ended;

determining if the depressed key is a hand out key or a hold key in

case a key had been depressed;

randomly drawing cards not being held in case the hand out key

had been depressed;

holding cards in case the hold key had been depressed;

actualize the intermediate state;

determining if a certain winning combination had been reached;

randomly drawing again all cards if the certain winning combination had been reached;

determining again if the game time has ended if the certain winning combination had not been reached.

4.   (previously presented)   The method for operating a coin actuated entertainment automat according to claim 3 further comprising

determining if a special symbol combination or a jackpot winning value has been reached after inserting payment into the automatic entertainment automat.

5.   (previously presented)   The method for operating a coin actuated entertainment automat according to claim 3 further comprising

networking a second entertainment automat to the first entertainment automat;

determining which one of the entertainment automats assumes a

master function;

determining which one of the entertainment automats assumes a

slave function;

determining if a jackpot filling level has reached a predetermined

release amount;

starting a jackpot game at the entertainment automat performing the

slave function;

waiting till the slave is ready;

activating the game time for the entertainment automats;

randomly drawing all cards;

determining if a game time has ended;

collecting the game results of the slave entertainment automat in

the master entertainment automat;

distributing of the game results to the slave entertainment automat

by the master entertainment automat;

calculating of the winning amount;

displaying the winning amount.

6.   (previously presented)   The method for operating a coin

actuated entertainment automat according to claim 5 further

comprising

sending a readiness signal to the master entertainment automat;

waiting by the slave entertainment automat for an activation of the

game time through the master entertainment automat.

7.   (previously presented)   A method for operating a coin

actuated entertainment automat with a coin acceptance device and a

coin test device, a symbol display device and a control unit for

controlling the course of the game, wherein the control unit

includes a microcomputer and a pseudorandom number generator,

wherein the game course can be influenced by an operational

element disposed on the front side of the entertainment automat,

and wherein a displayed symbol combination comprises several

symbols, and wherein a symbol can be substituted by another randomly determined symbol,

wherein upon reaching of a predetermined symbol combination or upon reaching of a predetermined credit balance in a credit balance counter disposed on the side of the control unit in the following a symbol combination is displayed with the symbol display device (2), and wherein the symbols can be renewed within a predetermined time window, until the winning carrying symbol combination is reached, and wherein the obtained winning is accumulated in the credit balance counter.

8.   (original)   The method according to claim 7, wherein the entertainment automats (1) are networked together, and wherein the played entertainment automats (1) are simultaneously switched into a uniform game mode upon reaching of a predetermined symbol combination or upon reaching of a predetermined credit balance state of a common credit balance counter, wherein in the game

mode is determined at which entertainment automat (1) the highest

winning value is reached within a time window predetermined by

the control unit (7), and wherein the winning value is coordinated

to that entertainment automat (1), which entertainment automat (1)

has reached the highest winning within the time limited game

mode.

9.   (previously presented) A method for operating a coin actuated

entertainment automat comprising

placing a coin into a coin acceptance device of an entertainment

automat;

testing the coin in a coin testing device;

displaying symbols on a symbol display device, wherein a

displayed symbol combination comprises several symbols and

wherein upon reaching of a predetermined symbol combination or

upon reaching of a predetermined credit balance in a credit balance

counter disposed on the side of the control unit in the following a

symbol combination is displayed with the symbol display device;

controlling the course of the game with a control unit including a

microcomputer and a pseudorandom number generator;

influencing the course of the game by an operational element

disposed on the front side of the entertainment automat;

substituting a symbol by another randomly determined symbol;

renewing the symbols within a predetermined time window until a

winning carrying symbol combination is reached;

accumulating the obtained winning in a credit balance counter; and

switching simultaneously the coin actuated entertainment automats

disposed in the network into a common supplemental game when a

predetermined value of a common jackpot is surpassed.

10.   (previously presented)   The method according to claim 1,

further comprising

monitoring a credit balance state with a first operational block exhibiting a game stake;

monitoring the total playing time by a second operational block;

randomly determining winning symbols during the complete game time by a control unit;

illustrating and displaying the randomly determined winning symbols with a symbol display device;

activating a first branching block by a third operational block for determining the remaining residual game time;

determining in a second branching block in case of a presence of remaining residual game time, if an operating element furnished on the front side of the entertainment automat has been actuated;

performing a return to the first branching block in case of an absence of an operating element activation.

11.   (previously presented)   The method according to claim 1, further comprising

determining which operational element was actuated in case of an

activation of an operational element;

presenting card symbols with the symbol display device;

drawing not held cards by new cards determined randomly from the

card storage in a fourth operational block;

determining a winning value of a displayed symbol combination;

displaying the winning value in a fifth operational block;

checking in a third branching block, if the maximum winning value

is displayed with the symbol display device;

holding the winning symbols displayed with the symbol display

device upon remaining of a residual game time can be held in the

following by activation of an operational element;

performing a return from the third branching block to the first

branching block upon checking if the game time has ended;

determining an actualized winning value in case of an ended game

time in a sixth operational block;

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performing a return from the sixth operational block to a first operational block by checking, if a further credit balance state for basing a further game stake is present.

12.   (previously presented)   The method according to claim 1, further comprising

determining symbol combinations randomly in case of a credit balance state exhibiting a game stake in the credit balance counter of the entertainment automat;

performing a switch over from a base game into a supplemental game by a control unit in case a predetermined winning value is coordinated to the symbol combination displayed by the symbol display device or if a particular symbol combination is displayed with the symbol display device;

determining in a branching block if a preset jackpot winning value has been reached or surpassed for a predetermined symbol combination.

13.   (previously presented)   The method according to claim 1, further comprising

monitoring a total game time by an operational block;

randomly determining winning symbols by a control unit during a total game time;

displaying the randomly determined winning symbols with the symbol display device;

activating a branching block by an operational block for determining the remaining residual game time;

checking in the branching block in case of a presence of remaining residual game time, if an operational element present on the front side of the entertainment automat has been actuated;

performing a return to a branching block in case of no actuation of the operational element;

checking which one operational element was actuated in case of an actuation of the operational element;

checking in the branching block 45, if a maximum winning value is

displayed with the symbol display device;

performing a return upon non-reaching of the maximum winning

value from one branching block to a second branching block,

wherein the game time is checked in the second branching block;

displaying winning symbols with the symbol display device upon

remaining of a residual game time;

holding the display of the winning symbols by actuating of the

operational element or throwing out all up to now held cards by

actuating an entry block.

performing a return from the one branching block to the second

branching block by checking if the game time has ended;

determining an actualized winning value in an operational block in

case of an ended game time, and displaying actualized winning

value with a coordinated display means;   performing a return from

a second operational block to a third operational block by checking

if a further credit balance state sufficient for a game stake is present.

14.   (previously presented)   The method according to claim 2, further comprising

initiating a network by actuating the power switch of each entertainment automat;

assuming of the master function by one of the entertainment automats, wherein the master function comprises essentially that a coordination of the entertainment automats present in the network is performed with respect to the collection of data through the counter state of the jackpot amount and the release of a common special game, which takes place at all entertainment automats present in the network at the same time;

switching the second entertainment automat present in the network to a slave function;

randomly determining a symbol combination in an operational block and displaying the symbol combination in the symbol display device in case of a sufficient credit balance state;

transferring an adjustable shared part amount of the game stake of each base game to a common jackpot counter;

checking the counter state of the jackpot counter in a branching block following to a determination of the winning value in the base game;

sending from the master a control signal to all other entertainment automats present in the network if the predetermined jackpot counter state is reached or surpassed, wherein the slaves switch to the supplemental game based on the control signal after termination of the base game;

monitoring in an operational block, if an okay signal was returned by all slaves;

starting the supplemental game at the same time in all participating coin actuated entertainment automats.

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15.   (previously presented)   The method according to claim 2, further comprising

activating an entertainment automat in case of a credit balance state exhibiting a game stake;

monitoring a total game time by an operational block;

randomly determining winning symbols by a control unit and displaying the winning symbols with the symbol display device within the total game time;

activating a branching block for determining the remaining residual game time by the operational block;

checking in a branching block if an operational element disposed on the front side of the entertainment automat was actuated in case of a presence of remaining residual game time;

performing a return to the branching block if no operational element actuation took place;

checking in case of actuation of the operational element which operational element was actuated;

determining and displaying a game result of the displayed symbol combination in an operational block;

determining in a first branching block if a maximum winning value is displayed with the symbol display device;

performing a return from the first branching block to a second branching block 39 case of a non-reaching of the maximum winning value; and

checking the game time in the second branching block.

16.   (previously presented)   The method according to claim 2, further comprising

performing a return upon reaching of the maximum winning value from a branching block to an operational block, wherein new winning symbols are randomly determined in the operational block and are displayed with the symbol display device;

displaying winning symbols in case of a remaining residual game time with the symbol display device and holding the winning symbols in the following by actuating the operational element or throwing out all up to now held cards by actuating an entry block;

performing a return from the first branching block to the second branching block;

checking in the second branching block, if the game time has ended;

scanning the individual results of the slave entertainment automats are scanned by the entertainment automat turned master in case of an ended game time;

accumulated the incoming game results by the master;

communicating the incoming game results from the master to the slaves;

determining the winning value in the following in an operational block;

displaying the determined winning value with the coordinated display means of a respective entertainment automat;

performing a return from an operational block displaying the winning value to a second operational block checking the game stake.

17.   (previously presented)   The method according to claim 2, further comprising

initiating a network by actuating the power switch of each of the entertainment automats, wherein one of the entertainment automats assumes a master function;

switching further entertainment automats contained in the network to slave operation; wherein the slave function comprises essentially that predetermined data are transmitted continuously to the master after request;

randomly determining a symbol combination in an operational block in case of a sufficient credit balance state;

displaying the determined symbol combination with the symbol display device;

transmitting an adjustable share part of the stake of each base game to a common jackpot counter;

checking in a branching block, if an instruction is present from the master to start thereupon a supplemental game following to the determination of the winning value in the base game;

confirming a receipt of the instruction of the start of the supplemental game to the master;

activating the entertainment automat in case of a credit balance state exhibiting at least a game stake;

checking by an operational block, if the master signal for the special games is present;

randomly determining winning symbols by a control unit during the complete game time;

displaying the determined winning symbols with the symbol display device;

activating a first branching block for determining the remaining residual game time by an operational block;

checking in a second branching block, if an operational element furnished on the front side of the entertainment automat was actuated;

performing a return to the first branching block in case no actuation of an operational element took place and in case of a presence of a remaining residual game time.

18.   (previously presented)   The method according to claim 2, further comprising

checking   which operational element was actuated in case of an actuation of an operational element;

determining a game result of the displayed symbol combinations;

displaying the determined game result in the operational block;

determining in a branching block if a maximum winning value is displayed with the symbol display device;

performing a return from a first branching block to a second branching block in case of a non-reaching of the maximum winning value;

checking the game time in the second branching block;

performing a return from the first branching block to a second operational block;

performing a return upon reaching of the maximum winning value, wherein new winning symbols are randomly determined in the second operational block and wherein the new winning symbols are displayed with the symbol display device;

displaying winning symbols with the symbol display device in case of a remaining of residual game time;

holding the winning symbols in the following by actuating the operational element or throwing out all up to now held cards by actuating the entry block;

performing a return from the first branching block to the second branching block by checking if the game time has ended;

performing a return from a third operational block to a fourth

operational block by checking if a further credit balance state

sufficient for a game stake is present.

19. (previously presented) A system for operating a coin actuated

entertainment automat comprising

a first entertainment automat;

a second entertainment automat, wherein the first entertainment

automat and the second entertainment automat are forming a

network and are simultaneously switched, and

means for configuring the network connected to the first

entertainment automat and to the second entertainment automat,

wherein

the first entertainment automat and the second entertainment

automat are at the same time playing a base game, and wherein a

predetermined wining combination or a predetermined winning

value is reached in the base game, whereupon a supplemental game

is activated upon a trigger value on the first entertainment automat and on the second entertainment automat.

20. (previously presented) The system according to claim 19, wherein the first entertainment automat is furnished with a first additional operating element, wherein the first additional operating element is associated to each presented winning symbol and each presented winning symbol can be held in the following by action of the first operating element, and wherein the first entertainment automat includes a first separate processor and first software; wherein the second entertainment automat is furnished with a second additional operating element, wherein the second additional operating element is associated to each presented winning symbol and each presented winning symbol can be held in the following by action of the second operating element, and wherein the second

entertainment automat includes a second separate processor and second software.

21. (previously presented)   The system according to claim 19, wherein

one of the first entertainment automat and of the second entertainment automat performs a master function, and wherein the entertainment automat performing the master function drives the supplemental game which is performed on the first entertainment automat and on the second entertainment automat.

22. (previously presented)   The system according to claim 21, wherein

the entertainment automat performing the master function accumulates a jackpot amount as an adjustable shared part of the game stake of each base game, and wherein the entertainment

automat performing the master function scans individual game results and subdivides the jackpot winning amount.

23. (previously presented)   The system according to claim 19 further comprising

a display means furnished as a central large display field, wherein the display means displays the temporary jackpot value.

24.   (previously presented)   A network of entertainment apparatuses comprising

a first symbol display device;

first operating elements disposed near the first symbol display device;

a first opening for receiving coins, tokens or banknotes;

a first payment unit;

a first control unit connected to the first symbol display device, to the first operating elements, to the first opening and to the first payout unit;

a first symbol game device connected to the first control unit;

a first video controller having a symbol memory storage and connected to the first symbol display device and to the first control unit;

a first read-only memory including

a first pseudo random number generator program,

a first winning value recognition program,

a first display control program, and

a first winning plan program;

a first communications board associated with the first control circuit;

a first serial interface disposed at the first communications board;

a second symbol display device;

second operating elements disposed near the second symbol display

device;

a second opening for receiving coins, tokens or banknotes;

a second payment unit;

a second control unit connected to the second symbol display

device, to the second operating elements, to the second opening and

to the second payout unit;

a second symbol game device connected to the second control unit;

a second video controller having a symbol memory storage and

connected to the second symbol display device and to the first

control unit;

a second read-only memory including

a second pseudo random number generator program,

a second winning value recognition program,

a second display control program, and

a second winning plan program;

a second communications board associated with the second control circuit;

a second serial interface disposed at the second communications board;

a cable connecting the first serial interface to the second serial interface;

wherein a determination is set as to what game stake part is to be delivered to the jackpot.

25.   (previously presented)   The network of entertainment apparatuses according to claim 24, wherein the first symbol display device displays the temporary jackpot value;

wherein the second symbol display device displays the temporary jackpot value;

wherein the first control unit performs an automatic recognition for determining   which control unit assumes a master function and which control unit assumes a slave function;

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wherein the second control unit performs an automatic recognition for determining which control unit assumes a master function and which control unit assumes a slave function;

wherein a jackpot prerelease value is set;

wherein the jackpot is frozen upon reaching of the jackpot prerelease value; and

wherein a jackpot playout game is started at the first control unit and at the second control unit.

26.   (new)   The network of entertainment apparatuses according to claim 24, wherein the first symbol display device is furnished by a first flat picture screen and wherein the second symbol display device is furnished by a second flat picture screen;

wherein the first control unit is furnished with a furnished with a first microprocessor and wherein the second control unit is furnished with a furnished with a second microprocessor and.

27.   (new) A method for operating a coin actuated entertainment automat comprising

placing a coin into a coin acceptance device of an entertainment automat;

testing the coin in a coin testing device;

displaying symbols on a symbol display device, wherein a displayed symbol combination comprises several symbols and wherein upon reaching of a predetermined credit balance in a credit balance counter disposed on the side of the control unit in the following a symbol combination is displayed with the symbol display device;

controlling the course of the game with a control unit including a microcomputer and a pseudorandom number generator;

influencing the course of the game by an operational element disposed on the front side of the entertainment automat;

substituting a symbol by another randomly determined symbol;

renewing the symbols within a predetermined time window until a

winning carrying symbol combination is reached; and

accumulating the obtained winning in a credit balance counter.

28.   (new)   The method according to claim 27, further comprising

networking a second entertainment automat to the first entertainment automat;

simultaneously switching the played entertainment automats (1) into a uniform game mode upon reaching of a predetermined credit balance state of a common credit balance counter;

determining in a game mode the entertainment automat, which has reached the highest winning value within a time window predetermined by the control unit;

coordinating the winning value to that entertainment automat, which entertainment automat has reached the highest winning within the time limited game mode.

29.   (new)   The method according to claim 27, further comprising

delivering a percentage of each game stake to a jackpot;

determining a reaching or surpassing of a jackpot release value;

activating a special jackpot game sequence upon reaching or surpassing of the jackpot release value, which jackpot game sequence is the same at each used networked entertainment automat;

giving to each player of each used networked entertainment automat the possibility to achieve a predetermined result within a predetermined time period, wherein the player has to reach a winning symbol combination predetermined by the entertainment automat after an arbitrary number of games during the predetermined time period.

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 25 continue to be in the case.

New claims 26 through 29 are being submitted.

The language of claim 26 is based on the specification, page 7, last paragraph as well as page 8, last paragraph and based on page 8, line 12.

New claim 27 is based on the language of claim 1.

New claim 28 is based on the language of claim 2.

New claim 29 is based on the language of page 13, line 10; page 17, first and second paragraph.

The Office Action refers to Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102.

Claims 1-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Vancura. Vancura discloses Gaming Machines with

Bonusing. In his game he teaches the playing of a bonus game in a secondary machine adjacent to a primary machine. Vancura's invention substantially teaches the limitations as claimed.

Applicant respectfully excepts.

Claim 24 sets forth: "a first video controller having a symbol memory storage and connected to the first symbol display device and to the first control unit". There is no video controller taught in Vancura.

Claim 24 requires "a cable connecting the first serial interface to the second serial interface;". In contrast Vancura teaches that his primary and secondary slot machines are disposed adjacent and connected with a path. Thus the claim 24 of the present applicant employs a different construction compared with Vancura, which allows to place the machines of the network of the applicant rather remotely, for example in different rooms or different houses.

As to claim 26 applicant notes the language "flat picture screen". This is in clear contrast to the plurality physical reels, which are randomly spinning and have a predetermined number of stops taught by Vancura, in claim 1, column 3, lines 14 through 28; column 4, lines 58 through 60; column 5, lines 25 through 28; column 7, lines 18 through 23 and lines 65 through 67. Also the primary and secondary slot machine of Vancura have a number of reels and a payline, compare Vancura, column 3, lines 29 and 30.

In contrast to the physical reels of Vancura, the flat picture screen of claim 26 displays card symbols and a large display field with the jackpot. Claim 26 further requires a presence of a first microprocessor and of a second microprocessor. In contrast, Vancura teaches to use only a single microprocessor for two slot machines, compare Vancura reference, ccolumn5, lines 5 through 8. Thus the second microprocessor of claim 26 renders claim 26 patentable over the Vancura reference. It is further emphasized that the special game concerning the jackpot is played at all the

participating machines simultaneously. The reference Vancura does not make any suggestion that the single processor would run the same jackpot game at two or more machines simultaneously and there is no direction in Vancura to employ a second microprocessor to produce another run of the jackpot playout game.

Claim 28 requires "simultaneously switching the played entertainment automats (1) into a uniform game mode upon reaching of a predetermined credit balance state of a common credit balance counter;". In contrast, the Vancura reference teaches that only a certain combination of symbols will induce a bonus game, compare Vancura, column 7, lines 34 through 38 and lines 40 through 43 and column 18, lines 24 through 28. According to Vancura, only the second slot machine runs the bonus game, whereas according to claim 28 "the played entertainment automats (1) are simultaneously switched into a uniform game mode". Therefore claim 28 furnishes an operation clearly different from the Vancura reference.

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Claim 29 requires that the player has to obtain a predetermined result within a predetermined play period. Such operation is clearly not provided for by Vancura.

Reconsideration of all outstanding rejections is respectfully requested.

Entry of the present amendment is respectfully requested. All claims as presently submitted are deemed to be in form for allowance and an early notice of allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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